

# Youth Action

The World of ECA Youth Programs\*



Youth Programs Division  
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*Buhari Idris (middle, white cap) attends an Islamic Convention in Minnesota in 2005*

## Nigerian YES Alumnus Creates Learning Center

Since Buhari Idris returned to his home in Sokoto, Nigeria in June 2005, he has been busy putting into practice the lessons learned from his experiences on the YES program in the U.S. Buhari provides free tutoring in English, math, and Islamic studies to primary and secondary school children in the Kalfu area of Sokoto and surrounding environs. Through his efforts, a learning center for young teenagers in his community has begun. Young adults in the community manage the center. In addition, Buhari is an active member of the Kalfu Students Association (KALSA), a group of post-secondary school young adults with a passion to reduce the illiteracy rate in their community. Buhari was a student at the Washington High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa during the 2004-05 academic year.

## FLEX Alumni Run to Raise Funds for Kyrgyz Orphanage

On October 7, 20 FLEX alumni participated in the fourth-annual Alpine Fund five-kilometer Fun Run through the streets of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The race, which included more than 50 runners, raised about \$400 for two local orphanages.

FLEX alumni are loyal volunteers for the Alpine Fund, a local non-governmental organization that provides orphaned children with educational and outdoor opportunities, such as hiking and camping. For this event, some alumni ran, while others helped organize race logistics and circus artists' performances for the children from the Petrovka orphanage afterwards. Boris Pilopenko '99 took first place in the men's race, while Gulnisa Asymova '05 and Alexandra Solomatova '05 tied for fourth place among the women.



*Kyrgyz alums celebrate at the completion of the race*



## YES Alumni Bring Global Tree Planting Effort to Bangladesh

On October 4, seven YES alumni included Bangladesh in the list of countries participating in a worldwide tree planting initiative led by [Environment Online](#) (ENO). Continuing to build on the community service and leadership skills learned during their YES experience, alumni organized and implemented this event and served as role models to the school's 640 students who observed the tree planting. The trees were planted on the grounds of the [HURDCO School](#), which two YES alumni attended. Not only did the alumni help improve the environment, but they also provided much-needed shade on the school playground for the children to enjoy.



## \*Academic Year Programs





## Adjusting to America: Snapshots of 2006-07 Students



(not pictured) A-SMYLE student Zita Vajda and her host mom, Janeen Scharlau, recently volunteered with the ABC team for Extreme Makeover: Home Edition to build a home for a family in Gladbrook, Iowa whose house burned down last Christmas. Zita and Janeen assisted with security, catering, and clean up. Both thoroughly enjoyed the experience and felt they were lucky to have had the opportunity.



(left) YES student Leila Kabalan from Lebanon gets in the Halloween spirit in Maryland

(center) German CBYX student Julia Westermann (in white sneakers), enjoys river rafting with her host family in Pennsylvania

(right) Roman Bogdanov, a FLEX student from Russia, coaches a 6-year-olds' soccer team in North Carolina



### Meeting the U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan

In September, a group of 12 FLEX alumni, together with alumni of other State Department exchanges and local students, gathered at the Firdavsi Library's American Corner in Dushanbe to meet the new U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan, Tracey Jacobson.

FLEX Alumni Coordinator Malika Khakimova '04 described the activities of FLEX alumni in Tajikistan for the ambassador. Alumni were interested in how Ambassador Jacobsen, formerly the U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan, compared their activity with that of their fellow alumni in Turkmenistan. Ambassador Jacobson was impressed with the active FLEX alumni group in Tajikistan and asked the FLEX alumni for their help in reactivating the larger ECA alumni group, the Tajikistan Alumni Association (TAJAL). The audience also asked questions about TOEFL exams, scholarship opportunities and the possibility of opening more American Corners around Tajikistan.

### Additional Sources of Information for Youth Program Participants:

- State Department Alumni site: [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)
- Greetings from America, a radio program that shares the experiences of foreign nationals studying in the US with their home countries [www.greetingsfromamerica.org](http://www.greetingsfromamerica.org)
- FLEX Alumni info from American Councils [www.americancouncils.org/info\\_by\\_audience.asp?PageID=43&AudienceType=9](http://www.americancouncils.org/info_by_audience.asp?PageID=43&AudienceType=9)
- Amideast YES Alumni Newsletters – alumni in NEA countries [www.amideast.org/programs\\_services/exchange\\_programs/yes/newsletter/may\\_06/default.htm](http://www.amideast.org/programs_services/exchange_programs/yes/newsletter/may_06/default.htm)
- Afghan YES students' essays of their lives in Afghanistan and the US in the student voices section of News Hour Extra online site [www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/asia/afghanistan](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/asia/afghanistan)